

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections of the application are respectfully requested in view of the amendments and remarks herewith, which place the application into condition for allowance. The present amendment is being made to facilitate prosecution of the application. Applicant's Attorney gratefully acknowledges the courtesy extended by Examiner Danneman during the interview on February 6, 2009.

I. STATUS OF THE CLAIMS AND FORMAL MATTERS

Claims 1-59 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 27-30, and 56-59, which are independent, are hereby amended. No new matter has been introduced by this amendment. Support for this amendment is provided throughout the Specification. Changes to the claims are not made for the purpose of patentability within the meaning of 35 U.S.C. §101, §102, §103, or §112. Rather, these changes are made simply for clarification and to round out the scope of protection to which the Applicant is entitled.

II. REJECTIONS UNDER 35 U.S.C. §103(a)

Claims 1-59 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as allegedly unpatentable over U.S. Publication No. 2004/0243665 to Markki, et al. (hereinafter, merely "Markki") in view of U.S. Publication No. 2003/0056093 to Huitema, et al. (hereinafter, merely "Huitema") and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,758,746 to Hunter, et al. (hereinafter, merely "Hunter").

Claim 1 recites, *inter alia*:

“...providing a first account with member access allowing two or more privileges in the network;

linking the second account having general access to the first account having member access; and

granting at least one privilege of said member access to said second account while said second account is linked to said first account

wherein, when the second account and the first account are not linked, the second account reverts back to previous general access." (Emphasis added)

Applicant submits that the present application is generally related to managing and linking network accounts to share access privileges among accounts. Claim 1 is directed to linking two different accounts, each with a different amount of access to services. The member service has more privileges and is more desirable. A general access is restricted to many of the privileges of the member access service. By linking to a member access account, the general access account has temporary access to one or more privileges of the member access account. When the second account and the first account are not linked, the second account reverts back to previous general access.

Applicant submits that the combination of Markki, Huitema, and Hunter do not disclose the above-identified features.

Specifically, Applicant submits that the combination of Markki, Huitema, and Hunter do not teach:

1) **providing a second account with general access, allowing:**

A) **at least one privilege in the network that member access allows and**

B) **at least one privilege less than the member access allows;**

2) linking the second account having general access to the first account having member access; and

3) **granting at least one privilege of said member access to said second account while said second account is linked to said first account.**

4) **when the second account and the first account are not linked, the second account reverts back to previous general access.**

The combination of the references may disclose tiered membership levels, such as Hunter allowing playing a game with an existing character or purchasing a character with various attributes. However, claim 1 is directed to providing the two accounts, each with different access levels, AND linking the second account to the first, AND while linked, granting at least one privilege of first account to the second account.

None of the cited portions of Markki, Huitema, or Hunter teach or suggest the above-recited features.

Furthermore, as understood by Applicant, Markki relates to searching for reachable entities via networking, allowing for communication among node users, and performing sharing operations. Generally, Markki teaches group forming through peer-to-peer networking.

For example, portions of Markki cited by the Office Action, specifically paragraphs [0041] and [0042], fall under the "Group Join Operations" heading and teach that information about a group can be sent to a user without a request. The information may include an invitation or descriptions activating software modules.

The unsolicited activation of the software modules does not teach or suggest the features of claim 1. A fundamental difference is that in the present invention, the second account with general access must have at least one network privilege already.

The differences in access in Markki relate to the membership in different groups. Unsolicited invitations are sent to increase group membership or to synchronize group membership among a user's terminals. Membership in different groups and unsolicited invitations to synchronize do not teach or suggest the aforequoted features of claim 1.

Huitema provides peer-to-peer group security. The two levels of access in Huitema are those that are members and those that are not. Those that are not are only allowed to respond. However, there is no disclosure that those that are not are provided with any privileges that members are and there is not teaching that accounts are linked in order to share privileges.

As understood by Applicant, Hunter relates to providing a customized interactive experience by making available different characters, each with different costs and attributes, and allowing a user to select them for a character database.

The cited portions of Hunter, specifically column 4, line 60 – column 5, line 5, relate to why games must charge a subscription fee (to improve the game) and teach that if developers do not improve their game, they may lose subscribers and become less profitable.

Applicant submits that nothing has been found in Markki, Huitema, or Hunter, taken alone or in combination, that would teach or suggest the above-identified features of claim 1.

Applicant has reviewed U.S. Patent No. 6,519,629 to Harvey et al. (hereinafter merely "Harvey") that was identified by the Examiner. Specifically, Applicant has reviewed column 11, lines 31-53. Applicant understands that Harvey describes a privacy level of a community. However, Applicant submits that access to the community, as described in Harvey does render the linking and unlinking features of claim 1 unpatentable.

Therefore, Applicant submits that claim 1 is patentable.

For similar reasons as those described above, claims 27-30 and 56-59 are also patentable.

III. DEPENDENT CLAIMS

The other claims in this application are each dependent from one of the independent claims discussed above and are therefore believed patentable for at least the same reasons. Since each dependent claim is also deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual reconsideration of the patentability of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Similarly, because Applicant maintains that all claims are allowable for at least the reasons presented hereinabove, in the interests of brevity, this response does not comment on each and every comment made by the Examiner in the Office Action. This should not be taken as acquiescence of the substance of those comments, and Applicants reserve the right to address such comments.

CONCLUSION


In the event the Examiner disagrees with any of statements appearing above with respect to the disclosure in the cited reference, it is respectfully requested that the Examiner specifically indicate those portions of the reference providing the basis for a contrary view.

In view of the foregoing amendments and remarks, it is believed that all of the claims in this application are patentable and Applicant respectfully requests early passage to issue of the present application.

Please charge any additional fees that may be needed, and credit any
overpayment, to our Deposit Account No. 50-0320.

Respectfully submitted,

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